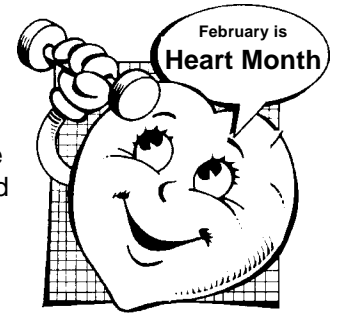


February is Heart Month

Heart disease is a common health concern for many people because it is the number-one killer in the United States. Today, we know a lot about what causes heart disease and what we can do for ourselves to help prevent it.

There are several health and lifestyle factors associated with heart disease. Luckily, these factors can be controlled with a commitment to personal health and a positive attitude toward daily life.



A person who wants to prevent heart disease should follow these guidelines:

- Quit or don't start smoking.
- Reduce the amount of fat in your diet, especially saturated fat, which is primarily found in animal foods. Some vegetable fats such as palm oil and coconut milk or oil are also saturated, as are hydrogenated fats. Try to limit the percentage of daily calories from fat to no more than 30 percent of your total calories.
- Limit your cholesterol intake to less than 300 milligrams a day. Cholesterol is found in animal foods including butter, egg yolks, whole-milk dairy products, meat, poultry and fish.
- Eat a varied diet that emphasizes whole grains, vegetables, fruits and whole-grain breads and pastas.
- Cut down on saturated fat and sugary foods.
- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Learn to manage stress.
- Watch your blood pressure.

A person's gender, age, family history, medical history and other health factors can also affect the tendency to develop heart disease. The best way to start protecting against heart disease is to know your personal risk factors and tailor your lifestyle changes to suit your particular medical needs.

If you would like more information on heart health, or to request information for safety meetings, call HEHF Health Education Services at 373-3729 or send an e-mail message to *HEHF Health Education Services. ■